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ABSTRACT

This report is a series on the Program of Special Directed Studies for Transition to College (PSDS), which is a five-year experimental education project aimed at providing a full four-year high-quality college education for disadvantaged youths who would probably not otherwise have been eligible for admission to most four-year colleges. A research and evaluation program planned as an intrinsic part of the experimental project encompassed a pre-test and post-test control-group design to provide analyses of test score changes as well as of comparisons with scores of other students. The test battery included: (1) questionnaire measures of demographic variables, family background, and attitudes toward college and the PSDS program, and (2) standardized and experimental measures of personality and motivational variables such as self esteem, social adjustment, interests, expectations, and values. A success rate of over 50% of PSDS students was claimed as a result of examination of general data on success. The attitudes, values, and personality traits of PSDA students were shown to be remarkably similar to those of more advantaged "typical" Claremont College students, and the ability of the former students to compete successfully with the latter was also held to be equally remarkable. [For an earlier report of the Program, see ED 035 910.] (RJ)

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Effects of a Compensatory College Education Program for the Disadvantaged: A Further Report[1]

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This is one of a series of reports on the Program of Special Directed Studies for Transition to College (PSDS Program) which is conducted by the Center for Educational Opportunity at the six Claremont Colleges.

The PSDS Program is a five-year experimental education project primarily sponsored by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. It is aimed at providing a full four-year, high-quality college education for disadvantaged youths who would probably not otherwise have been eligible for admission to most four-year colleges. These youths are mostly Mexican-American and black students (some Indians and some Anglos) from a background of poverty and inadequate elementary and secondary education, and from families having cultural patterns and values which differ from those of the dominant white society.

The program began in September, 1968 when 40 such disadvantaged students were admitted to undergraduate study at the Claremont Colleges with their financial needs being fully met. Careful preparations were made to provide a special three-week orientation period for them before the college semester began in order to tailor carefully their specific courses and overall course load to their abilities, interests, and levels of preparation, and to make available continuing personal and academic counseling specifically suited to their individual needs and problems. Each student knew that he or she had as long as two years, if he needed it, to show by his performance that he could qualify as a regular student in one of the Claremont Colleges. As long as he is in the Program, no record of grades is kept on his permanent transcript.

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The Research and Evaluation Program

A research and evaluation program was planned as an intrinsic part of this experimental educational project. The general research plan was a pre-test and post-test, control-group design so as to allow for an analysis of changes in test scores during the school year as well as a comparison of initial scores and changes with those of other students. Two comparison groups were used: one was a randomly selected group of 40 non-minority group freshmen at the Claremont Colleges; the other was a randomly selected group of 20 minority-group freshmen who were not in the PSDS program. This design allowed the PSDS students to be compared not only to average Claremont Colleges students, but also to other minority group students who had ostensibly more adequate backgrounds for college work.

All three groups were pre-tested during the orientation period or at the very beginning of the school year and post-tested in the final month of the school year. In addition, information about their academic success and social adjustment was systematically collected from their instructors, advisors, student deans, and dormitory resident advisors at the end of the first semester and again at the end of the second semester. Finally, every student in each of the three groups was given a 1½ hour semi-structured interview in March, covering areas of academic life, family relationships, friendships at college, and social life and activities at college, as well as measures of cognitive style and moral judgment.

The pre-test and post-test battery included: (a) questionnaire measures of demographic variables, family background, and attitudes toward college and the PSDS program, (b) a variety of standardized and experimental measures of personality and motivational variables such as self-esteem, social adjustment, interests, expectations, and values.

Last year at the Western Psychological Association we reported some descriptive data about the PSDS students on demographic characteristics and on a few aptitude and personality measures (Oskamp, Friedlander, Thompson, 1969). We also reported some initial preliminary findings about changes in the students during the school year and about their success in the program (Spuck and Stout, 1969). The present paper amplifies the above information, reporting comparisons with the Non-PSDS control group on demographic characteristics, aptitude and personality measures, attitude and experiential information from the semi-structured interview, and longer-range follow-up data of college success.

Descriptive Data -- Demographic and Psychometric

The technical report (Spuck, 1969a) comparing the PSDS students with the control group gave the following summary of their differences and similarities.

The PSDS students came from larger families, but families in which fewer of their brothers or sisters had attended or graduated from college. The parents of PSDS students were more frequently separated, divorced, or deceased than were those of the comparison group, and their parents had

received substantially less formal education than those of the comparison group. An index of occupational socio-economic status revealed that the fathers of comparison group students were employed in occupations with more responsibility and status such as professionals, managers, or technical workers, while the PSDS fathers were more likely to be employed in jobs such as auto mechanics, bus drivers, or plasterers. In general the PSDS students had a level of cultural activities and material possessions significantly below the comparison group, but they were at about the level of national norms, that is, not markedly disadvantaged with respect to the national population.

High schools attended by the PSDS students tended to be smaller with a higher percentage of minority group students. Grade point averages differed, the comparison group having approximately a 3.5 (B_+) and the PSDS group having about a 2.8 (B-). Another standard index of college potential, the Scholastic Aptitude Tests, showed those in PSDS to have verbal scores averaging 453 and mathematics scores averaging 461, while the comparison group had scores of 625 and 609 respectively.

It is apparent that the personal, social, and academic backgrounds of the two groups were substantially different. The comparison group came from advantaged families, with well-educated parents, and had academic credentials traditionally related to college success, while the students in PSDS were from homes and families near the national average and their academic credentials were far below those usually considered for admission to colleges as selective as the Claremont Colleges.

The PSDS group, whether due to the bias of the test or to actual differences between groups, scored lower at each testing (both pre-test and post-test) on the achievement and ability measures than did the comparison group. It is interesting to note, however, that none of the standardized measures given at pre-test were significantly related to success in college during the first semester for the students in the PSDS group. While the test differences may be real, they were not related to college success (Spuck and Stout, 1969). This evokes concern about the tests' predictive and construct validity for students such as those in PSDS.

While the personal, racial, and academic backgrounds as well as achievement and ability test scores differed greatly between the two student groups, differences were not so evident along the dimensions measured by the College and University Environment Scales, the Mooney Problem Check-list, or the Adjective Check-list.

Personality Measures

Rotter's (1966) locus of control scale was designed to measure subjects' expectations about whether their behavior (a) is controlled by external forces or (b) can help to shape the external environment (an internal orientation). The Coleman report (Coleman et al., 1966) found that an internal score on this scale was one of the best available predictors of academic success for Negro college students, and therefore we expected PSDS students to differ from non-PSDS students on it. The mean pre-score for

our PSDS group was 9.95, somewhat higher (i.e., more external) than most other samples in the literature. However, the non-PSDS comparison group for whom we had complete pre- and post-data had a mean score of 11.2, even more external than the PSDS students. Moreover, during the course of their freshman year, both groups became still more external, scoring 11.3 and 12.1 respectively in May (a non-significant difference).

The Janis and Field (1959) scale of self-esteem was expected to differentiate the PSDS and comparison groups and to be related to success in college. As expected, the PSDS students showed markedly less self-esteem on this scale than the published norms for college students, but so did the comparison group (means of 56.4 and 57.6 respectively). By the end of the school year both groups had increased in self-esteem, as expected, and by a roughly equal amount (means of 50.9 and 50.1 respectively).

An adjective Q-sort developed by Haan, Smith and Block (1968) was used as an indicator of the value systems of the subjects. Values were measured by having each student sort the 63 adjectives into seven piles from most descriptive to least descriptive of his ideal self. As in Smith's (1968) research with student protestors, it was expected that marked differences would be found between PSDS and comparison groups in their value systems, probably relating to a pattern of "middle-class morality" in the representative Claremont College sample, and traceable to different experiences and cultural patterns. However, again we were surprised to find that the two groups' values were very similar, in fact so much so that their number of significant differences was below a chance level. On the pre-college testing, here are the terms which each group said were quite descriptive and quite undescriptive of their ideal self (≥ 6 or ≤ 2 on a scale from 1-7). Note the several similar ratings:

PSDS Group	Comparison Group
individualistic	
not aloof, uninvolved	not aloof, uninvolved
not uncompromising	not uncompromising
not show-off	not show-off
not playful	not playful
not worrying	not stubborn
not self-controlled	
not needs approval	

At the end of the school year their values had changed fairly markedly, but both groups still did not differ beyond a chance level in their values. Then they described their ideal self as follows (again using several similar ratings):

PSDS Group	Comparison Group
independent	independent
responsible	responsible
	self-confident

not aloof, uninvolved	not aloof, uninvolved
not feels guilty	not feels guilty
not open, frank	not open, frank
not self-centered	not genuine
	not conventional
	not needs approval
	not moody
	not reserved, shy
	not stubborn
	not worrying
	not uncompromising
	not argumentative
	not rebellious

The only two adjectives on which their values differed significantly were that in the pre-college testing the non-PSDS group valued being "sympathetic" more highly than the PSDS group, and the PSDS group valued being "helpful" more highly. Similar tests of differences in values were also computed for black, Chicano, and Anglo sub-samples, but they also did not differ at a beyond-chance level. Thus, we were again led to conclude that, considering their marked differences in background, there was a surprising similarity in values between the PSDS and typical-Claremont-Colleges samples, both before the school year began, and after it was nearly completed.

Essentially the same conclusions were derived from another self-description instrument, the Kehas adjective rating scale, on which the subjects described both their real selves and their ideal selves. Again, the differences between the groups did not reach a chance level.

Another index relating to values did show significant differences between the groups, though not to an extreme degree. This was the Kohlberg (1964) moral dilemma stories, as modified for questionnaire administration by Haan, Smith, and Block (1968). This instrument classifies subjects according to their typical processes of moral reasoning. The subjects' answers to the open-ended questions about the moral dilemmas were scored by a Kohlberg-trained rater to yield a typological score for each subject on one (or more) of his six developmental stages of moral judgment or reasoning. Then the subjects were classified according to their primary stage of development, and X^2 tests of significant differences in frequencies were computed. As might be expected most of the subjects (83%) fell in stages 3 or 4, the two conventional levels of morality, with 9% being in the pre-conventional stage 2 and 8% in the post-conventional stage 5. None were in stages 1 or 6. On the X^2 tests, there were no sex differences in scores, but there was a significant ($p=.05$) group difference, with no PSDS students at stage 5 and an over-representation of them in stage 3. There was also a significant ($p=.05$) difference between ethnic groups when PSDS and non-PSDS groups were combined; Chicanos were over-represented at stage 3 and had no scores at stage 2 or stage 5, while Anglos were over-represented at stage 5, and blacks were proportionately distributed across all four stages. These are the first meaningful significant differences which we have found between these groups in the personality sphere. They do suggest some differences between the groups in processes of moral reasoning, but it should be remembered that these were not large differences and that there

is as yet no evidence whether they have continued as the students' college experience increased.

The final instrument for determining our students' attitudes and experiences was the 1½-hour, semi-structured interview, which was designed to obtain deeper and fuller information than possible from a questionnaire. Interviews were conducted by psychology graduate students especially trained for this project. They were tape-recorded and later coded by two independent raters. A number of significant differences were found here, both between PSDS and non-PSDS students, and between ethnic subgroups, as follows:

1. Chicano students stated more definite career plans than did blacks or Anglos (though even Chicanos were still quite indefinite on the average).

2. Black students reported more pleasure and active encouragement of their plans to enter the Claremont Colleges from their mothers than did the Chicanos and Anglos.

3. Black students said that their parents would be fairly understanding and supportive if they had academic problems, whereas Anglos and Chicanos expected no understanding.

4. The PSDS students reported receiving more encouragement of their college plans from family members other than parents than did the non-PSDS group. (Possibly this may be partly a function of larger family size in the PSDS group.)

5. Chicano students reported having many more close friends (9.7) than Anglos (4.5) or blacks (3.0).

6. Both blacks and Chicanos reported having more friends in other ethnic groups than did Anglos (perhaps a function of their being in the minority).

7. Non-PSDS students reported spending much more time with close friends (8.2 hrs. per day) than PSDS students (4.5 hrs.).

8. Blacks and particularly Chicanos reported holding offices or committee assignments in campus organizations more often than Anglos (probably a function of the activeness of UMAS and BSU).

9. Anglos were slightly less satisfied with the nature of their social participation.

10. PSDS students stated a greater desire to become more active in campus organizations than did non-PSDS students.

11. Interestingly, the blacks and Chicanos described themselves as feeling more accepted in their organizations than did the Anglos.

12. Interviewers rated both blacks and Chicanos as being significantly less defensive than Anglos.

Success in the PSDS Program

Preliminary data on a few measures of success in the program were presented last year at WPA (Spuck and Stout, 1969), and a fuller report was made subsequently (Spuck, 1969b). Another multi-dimensional analysis of grades, professors' ratings, self-ratings, peer-ratings, etc., is now underway. This paper will conclude with a brief summary of some of the most general data on success. For their first semester the PSDS students as a group had slightly below a C average (a GPA of 1.8), and for their second semester about a C+ (a GPA of 2.3). Results for the third semester are not yet computed, but other measures are available.

At the end of the first year of the program, a very typical number of 4 students (10%) had dropped out of the PSDS program (mostly for academic reasons) and one had been killed in a motorcycle accident. After three semesters, 12 students have dropped out of the program (some voluntarily), 21 have been transferred to regular student status in one of the Claremont Colleges, and of the 7 remaining in the program for a final semester most are doing about C work and will probably be accepted as regular students at the end of this year. Thus the success rate is already over 50% of the students who are doing satisfactory college work and are expected to graduate in due course, and it could go as high as 70%.

Conclusions

When we remember that these PSDS students did not have the traditional qualifications for college work and probably would not have been accepted in selective four-year colleges, two conclusions stand out:

1. It is remarkable how similar they are in attitudes, values, and personality traits to the more advantaged students who are typical of the Claremont Colleges' student bodies.

2. It is remarkable how successfully they have been able to compete with students from far better educational backgrounds in the competitive Claremont atmosphere.

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